

Re: Windows Update / Office Update again!

Source: <http://www.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/NT-Bugtraq/2004-09/0087.html>

From: Geoff Vass (geoff_at_CADZOW.COM.AU)

Date: 09/28/04

Date: Tue, 28 Sep 2004 07:36:48 +0930
To: NTBUGTRAQ@LISTSERV.NTBUGTRAQ.COM

The fact that Office won't install patches without the original media or the source files has, of course, been around since Office 2000.

This behaviour originates from the design of Windows Installer, and was so badly botched in the case of Office 2000 that Microsoft Australia were given to replacing Office 2000 disks with Office 2000 SR-1 disks because it became impossible to patch certain versions of Office 2000 RTM.

Of course now we know Microsoft themselves consider this Windows Installer behaviour to be a huge failure because Office 2003 will offer to cache the setup files! So presumably the Office team haven't been able to request any design changes of the Windows Installer team so they've given up and worked around it.

But the need to cache 500Mb of setup files just so you can update half-a-dozen files in the future is a pretty lame scheme and the fact that such a rigmarole is required to do this is an immense cock-up, IMHO.

Fortunately Office has not been the attack surface for as many serious exploits as the number of patches would suggest, so Microsoft has not needed to make any serious changes to this architecture. Perhaps we need a really serious outbreak to force some changes and make it simpler to keep Office updated, cf. where the Slammer worm forced a reworking of the SQL Server patch installer. Seriously, it should be possible to update Office with a flat directory of updated binaries and a batch file. MS need to stop dreaming up reasons why things are impossible. It's only software -- you can do anything with it you want!

It's funny that in the case of .NET and now SQL Server 2005 Express they make a big fuss over so-called XCOPY deployment in recognition of the fact that dropping updated files without a complicated local registration process is a much better way to get something done. Yet you can't drop an updated WINWORD.EXE in the Office directory.

Geoff Vass

-----Original Message-----

From: Windows NTBugtraq Mailing List

[<mailto:NTBUGTRAQ@LISTSERV.NTBUGTRAQ.COM>]On Behalf Of Fish

Sent: Saturday, 18 September 2004 11:52

To: NTBUGTRAQ@LISTSERV.NTBUGTRAQ.COM

Subject: Windows Update / Office Update again!

NTBugtraq Editor's Note:

Re: Windows Update / Office Update again!

NT-Bugtraq: Re: Windows Update / Office Update again!

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